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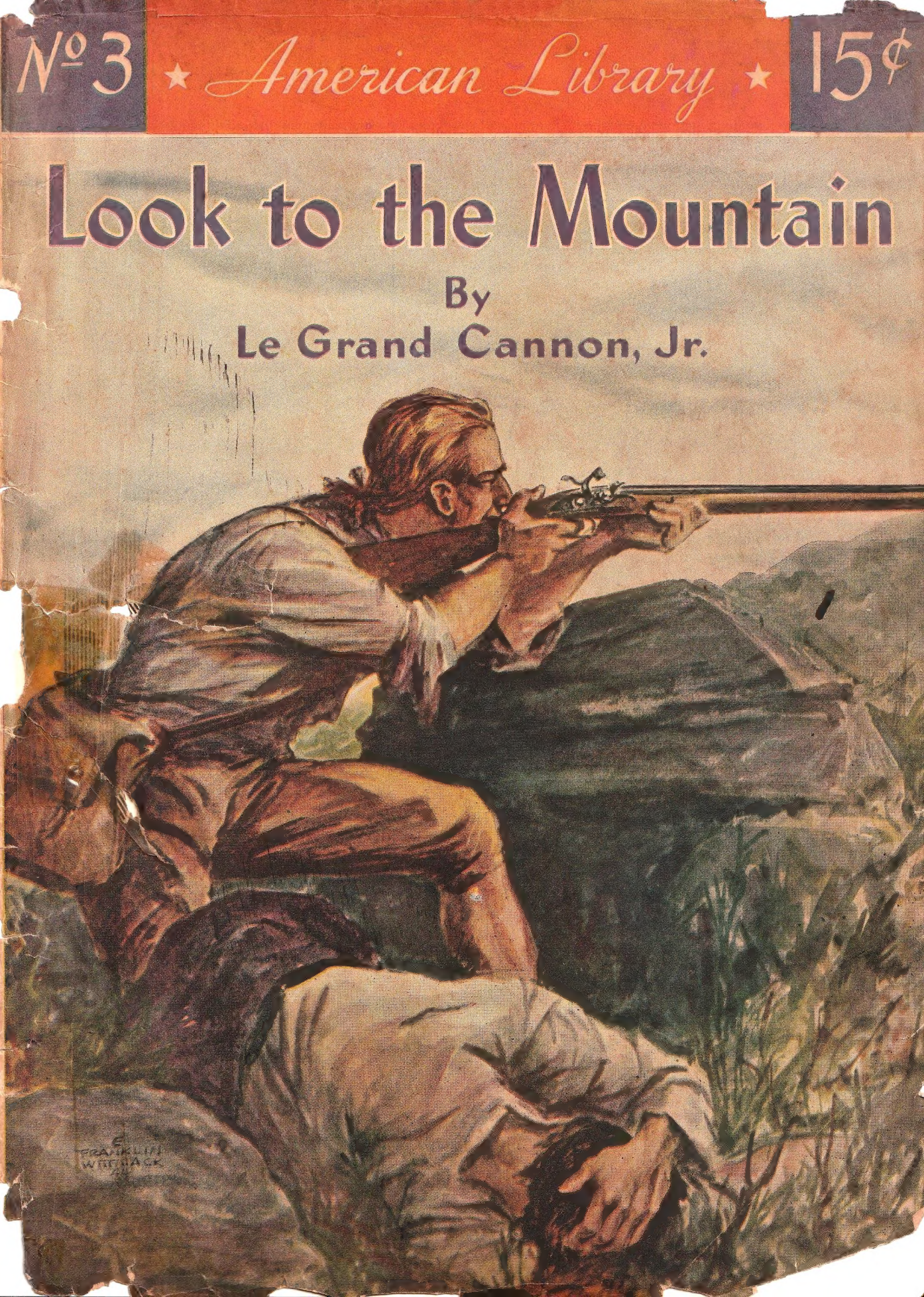
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Look to the Mountain

By
Le Grand Cannon, Jr.





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E. FRANKLIN WHEELER

A MAP OF THE SECTION OF NEW HAMPSHIRE IN WHICH THE ACTION OF THIS BOOK TAKES PLACE. DOTTED LINE INDICATES THE ROUTE TAKEN BY WHIT AND MELISSA FROM KETTLEFORD TO THEIR NEW HOME.

THE WHITE HILLS

CORUWAY MOUNTAIN

THE GRANTS

Orford

Town of Tamworth

WHIT'S PLACE

Town of Sandwich

Casumpy Pond

Gt. Ossipy Pond

Baker's River

Squam Brook

Winnipiseogee Pond

N E W H A M P S H I R E

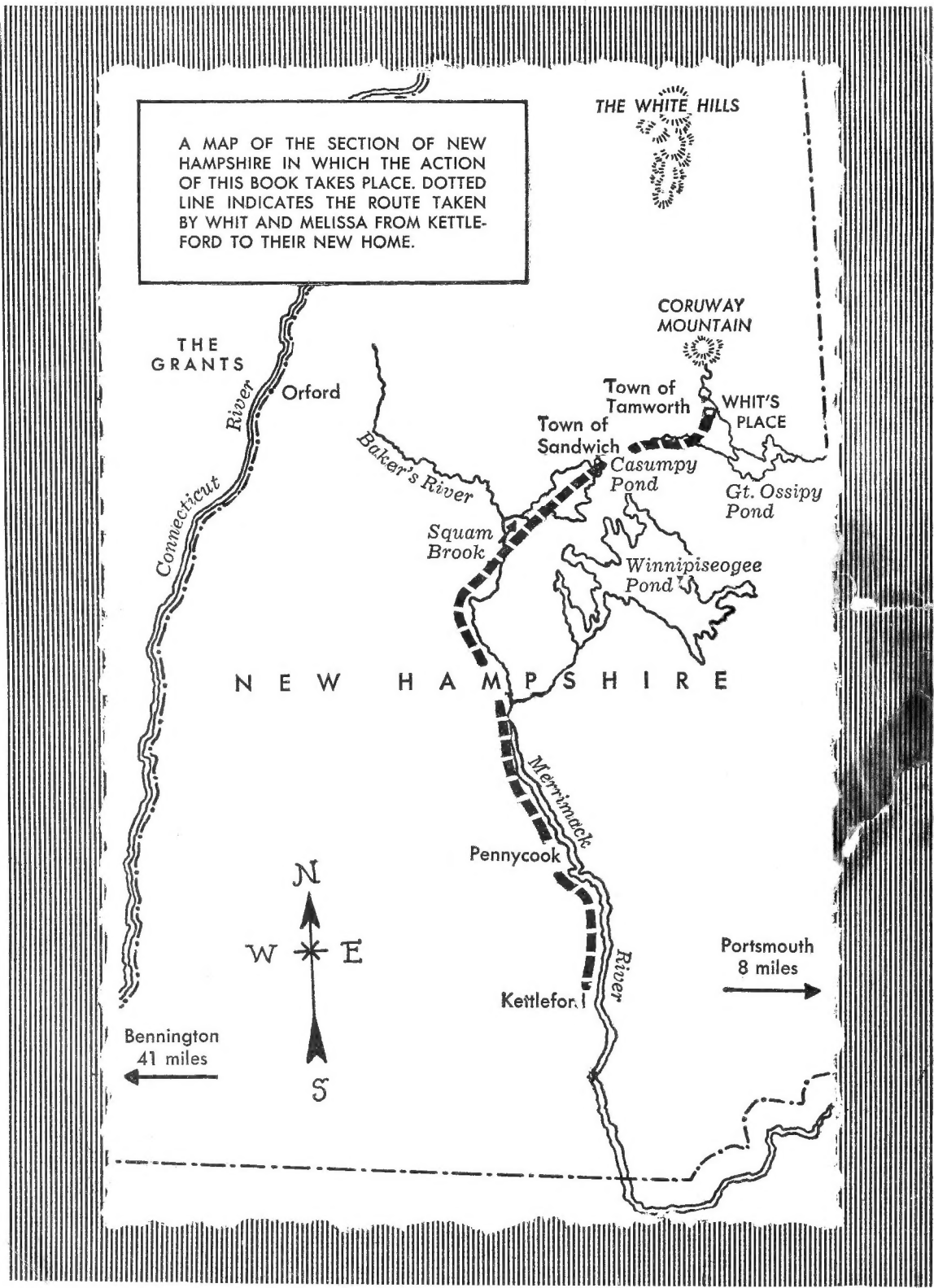
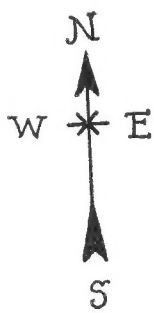
Merrimack

Pennycook

Kettleford

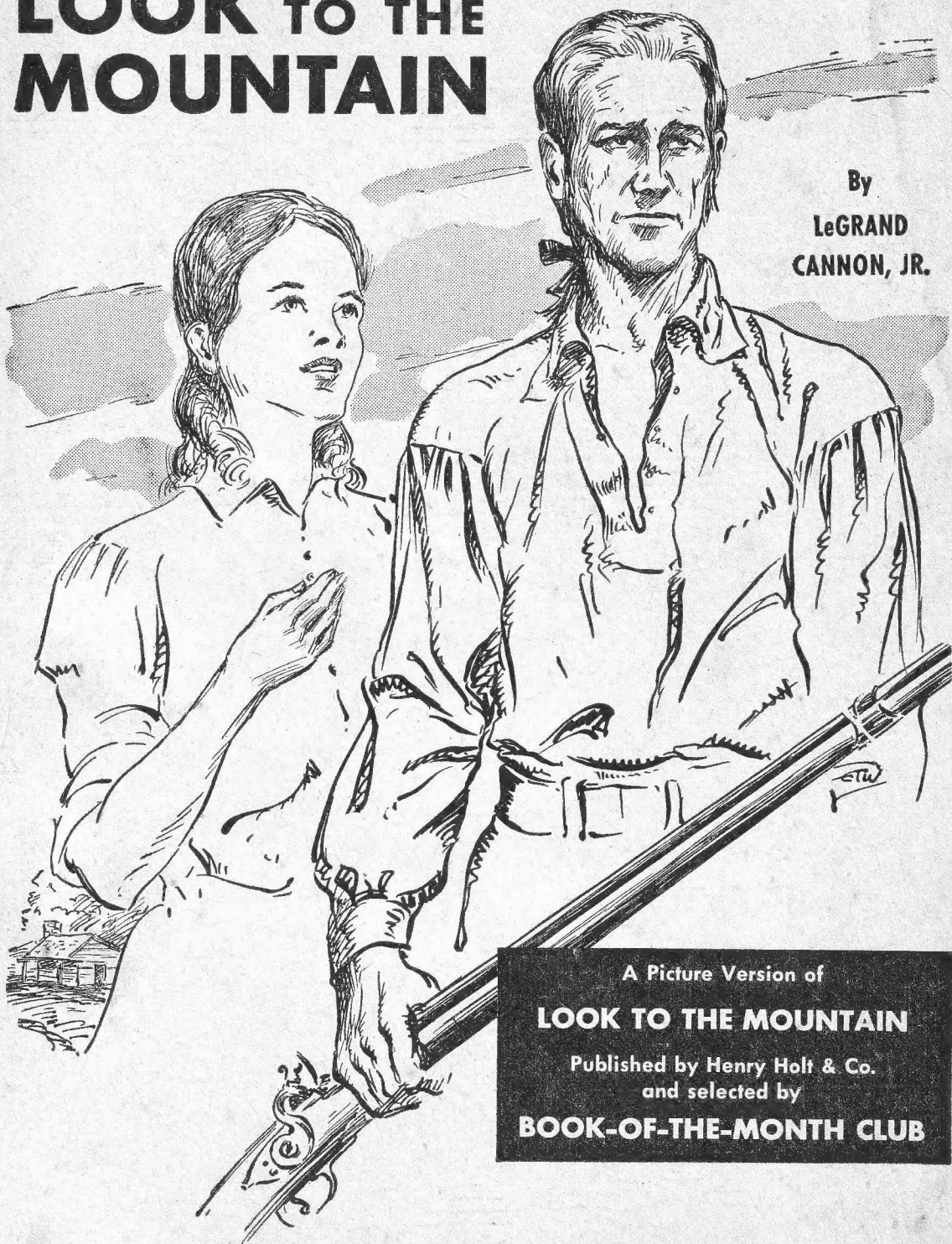
Portsmouth
8 miles

Bennington
41 miles



LOOK TO THE MOUNTAIN

By
LeGRAND
CANNON, JR.



A Picture Version of
LOOK TO THE MOUNTAIN
Published by Henry Holt & Co.
and selected by
BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB

DAVID McKAY COMPANY, WASHINGTON SQUARE, PHILADELPHIA

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— Look to the Mountain —



"Tom yanked the boy's shirt off and laid it on him with a piece of rope."

IT WAS A HOT, dry-feeling day early in August in the year 1769. Kettleford, in New Hampshire province, was haying. Throughout the whole township—on the west bank of Merrimack below Amoskeag Falls—there was nothing but haying. Politics, fishing, linen and flax, woodcutting and potatoes, those things were forgotten, or at least put aside.

No man was exempt from the haying chores. Young Nathaniel Thett, for example—he was the schoolmaster—swung a scythe. And so did Gavin Gowan, the minister, and Joe Felipe, the blacksmith. Joe had hayed on Sunday. He was a Por-

tygee, an ex-sailor, who had arrived after Captain Karr died and the town was without any smith. The reason the town didn't take to him better, Joe laid to Whit Livingston. It was Whit's fine mowing blade that kept the talk going about what a smith Karr had been. And so Joe hated Whit.

This young Whit Livingston was the best hand to mow that there was in Kettleford. Aside from that he was a joke. On Whit's twelfth birthday his father, Tom Livingston, had treated the boy at the tavern—and Whit hadn't been able to down the rum. The men standing around laughed, and Tom yanked the shirt off the

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit, whyn't you come and cut my hay?"



"We'll git a man to cut our'n."

boy's back and laid it on him with a piece of rope.

It was a long time after that before Whit would go to the tavern on an errand. But he was 19 now, tall, with a quiet face, and slow-spoken. He went to the tavern because of Melissa, daughter of Captain Butler, who kept the tavern. That's why he was there this August morning, and Captain knew it. "Whit," Captain demanded, "whyn't you come and cut my hay for me?"

"Well—"

"I could rake," said Melissa. Captain

was proud of himself. It was what he had hoped for. He figured his field was as good as mowed now.

But Captain had counted his chickens a little too soon.

Just himself and Melissa? Whit thought. All day alone? It was so much more than he'd hoped for that now he drew back. "Got to get our'n in first," he said.

Melissa banged shut the spigot she was holding. She stood up and faced Whit. "Go git it, then," she said. "We'll git a man to cut our'n."

Whit couldn't utter a word.

— Look to the Mountain —



"You can have this brandy, Joe, to mow on."



"Joe laughed. 'Too late, boy!'"

Whit Livingston felt his face flush at Melissa's taunt—and at that moment Joe Felipe, the blacksmith, ambled into the tavern. Captain Butler greeted him. "We were talkin' 'bout hay," Captain explained.

Joe wondered what Whit could have said about hay to make Melissa look that way.

"Joe," proposed Captain loudly, setting out a stone bottle, "you're done up to your place—you mow for me the rest of day, 'n you c'n have this bottle of brandy to mow on."

"I told Pa I'd rake," Melissa added coolly.

Joe's eyes went from one to the other—but he looked last at Whit. The boy was standing up, waiting . . .

Joe turned back to Captain. "Done," he said, and he reached for the bottle. "I take a roun' of it now."

Whit came over to the counter. "That's a big meadow; you'll want two hands to mow that meadow."

Joe laughed aloud. "Too late, boy!" he said.

Whit's not taking his eyes off of Joe for an instant made Captain uneasy. Captain slid his hand toward the bung-starter.

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit was scared, but stood quiet."

Joe finished his drink, and banged the glass on the counter. "Go on home, boy!" he told Whit. "I hear a'ready too much of your mowing."

"I got a good blade." Whit said it from habit.

"You and your Karr blade!" bellowed Joe, and whipped out his knife. He held the point of it, quivering, just under Whit's nose.

Whit stood his ground. He was scared, but stood quiet. Gently Captain moved into position. He had the bung-starter now and felt better.



"And t' best one to mow, she rake for him . . ."

There wasn't a sound from Melissa.

Joe's hand was trembling and so was his voice. "I c'n cut me more hay wit' t'is here little knife 'n what you c'n cut with your Karr blade! You come 'n mow! I show you t' man who c'n mow! José Felipe!"

"That's fair," Whit agreed.

"And t' best one to mow, she rake for him tomorrow. Si?"

Whit made no answer.

It was the girl's voice that came into the silence. She spoke low and even:

"That's fair."

— Look to the Mountain —



"Mr. Gowan explained the rules."



"Whit began to lose ground."

Joe Felipe, going back after his scythe, met a man on the road. The word of the mowing duel spread pretty fast after that, and a crowd gathered in the meadow. Mr. Gowan, the minister, worked out a simple plan which he explained to Joe and Whit: They'd mow the field lengthwise. Between swaths, they'd cross over. "First man to finish," Gowan said, "in the middle of the field and opposite here—is best hand to mow." He stepped to one side, and raised his hand. "Strike in!"

Joe started with a wide swath, half a yard wider than most men. Whit bent and struck in. He'd had to move over

some to his left hand because of the width of Joe's swath, and now, when he lengthened his own swing to match Joe's, Whit found it awkward. He began to lose ground. Joe kept on gaining all the way down the far side of the field. They began cheering him.

Whit stopped to whet his blade, and by the time he struck in again, Joe was so far in the distance that that hair ribbon of his didn't look any bigger than the red on a blackbird. The fresh edge was a help, but Whit was still awkward and clumsy. He'd been trying to keep Melissa from coming into his mind, and that didn't

— Look to the Mountain —



"Then he caught a glimpse of Melissa . . ."

work either. He kept hearing her voice: "That's fair." When he heard it, it made him mow like a wild man, with no thought of saving his strength any.

Then Whit caught a glimpse of Melissa in the crowd. Her eyes caught his, and held them for a brief instant. Whit's swing settled into a new rhythm. Melissa. He'd show her some mowing!

Whit began to gain slowly. Those who had bet on Joe fell silent. Parched, exhausted, his arms like leaden bars, Whit had no sense of motion any more. All he knew was that he was hard up against that



"Joe swung his scythe at Whit's legs."

solid space between him and Joe, trying somehow to force his way through it.

Joe was tired now, gulping air into his bursting lungs. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Whit pass him. Everything Joe had won, he saw Whit lugging off with him. It was hard on Joe. He saw Whit's legs moving away, two steps . . . and two steps . . . he saw the muscles working in the calves of them . . .

"Joe, you Portygee, you're no good," a man shouted.

That bit into Joe. He stepped toward the legs—four steps—and swung his scythe at them.

— Look to the Mountain —



"Joe reached for his knife and Ensign hit him."



"Whit looked up at the girl . . ."

Mr. Gowan, the minister, leaped forward when he saw Joe Felipe swing his scythe at Whit Livingston. He knocked Joe's right arm down, but the scythe sliced across the back of Whit's legs, cutting the leather breeches clean as a razor would and fetching Whit, too, but not deeply—not deep enough for a tendon.

Ensign Lord wasn't more than half a jump behind Gowan, and when Joe reached for his knife, Ensign hit him. Joe landed loosely, his head rolled—and he stayed there.

The men looked around then. They saw Melissa standing there at the finish—

standing stock still. No one spoke. Whit made his last swing, grounded his scythe and stood leaning on it. His head was bowed, and he swayed with his breathing.

Whit looked up at the girl. "I guess," he said slowly, "that'll take care of the mowin'. I'll rake it tomorrow."

"Yes," she told him, no one hearing her only Whit, if he did. Whit put his scythe to his shoulder and looked around for the place he must head for—saw it—and set off for home. Numb with exhaustion, he had gone more than a mile before he discovered the cut on his legs. But his head

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"At daylight he headed straight for the meadow."



"His arms brought her to him . . ."

was ringing so much he didn't want to try to figure out how it came to be there. He just let it go. When he reached home, Whit dropped off to sleep on a bearskin in front of the fire.

At daylight, Whit got up and headed straight for the meadow. He was surprised to see Melissa standing there. She waited, half smiling, while he collected himself—at least enough to say "Mornin'."

"Pa's lookin' for you," she informed him. "He sent me down here t' see if you'd come yet." This was almost true, anyhow; he would have sent her if he'd

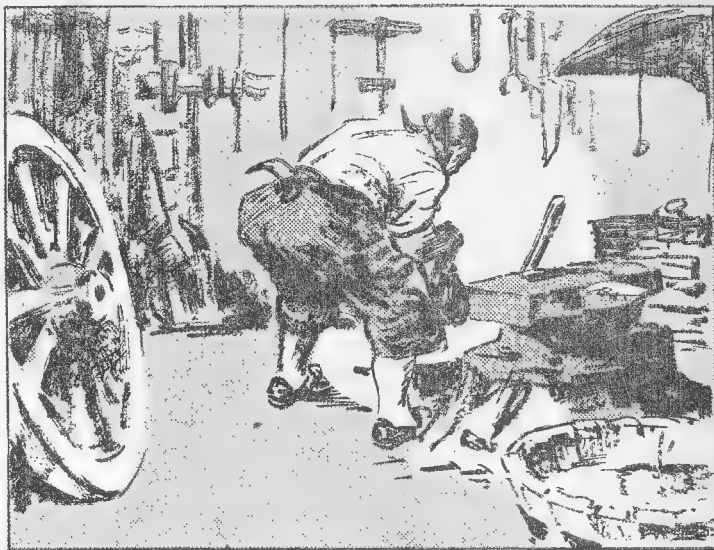
been awake. "Whit," she begged suddenly, "you *will* keep clear of Joe, won't you? For my sake. *Please!* You seen that knife, Whit..." Melissa was crying.

Whit had no choice in the matter. He couldn't have kept it back if he'd tried to, and there was in him no question and no fear of the outcome. He only knew of her presence. "M'lissa, I love you—" The words came of themselves. Melissa, tearfully, nodded her head. His arms brought her to him. Up to the instant his lips touched Melissa's, Whit knew where he was.

— Look to the Mountain —



"Joe concluded his jaw would mend."



"Gold pieces! In a pouch, hidden under the anvil . . ."

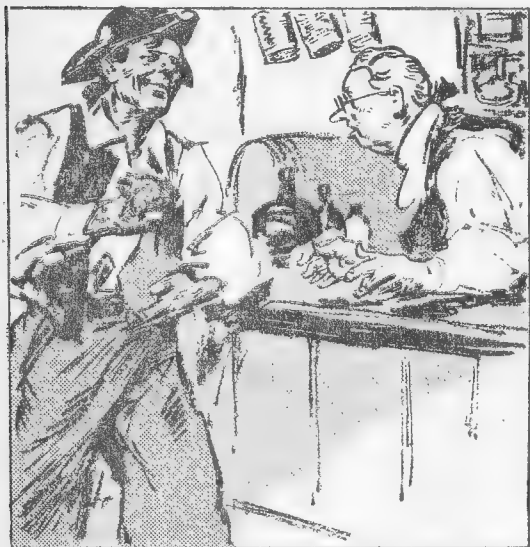
Joe Felipe, lying in his bed, made sober inspection of the state of his jawbone, which had received the full weight of Ensign Lord's knockout punch at the mowing duel. When he pressed sideways on his chin, it pained so much that it sickened him. But the jaw moved all in one piece. Joe concluded that it would mend of itself.

He lay on his back and tried to think of how things stood with him. He hated Whit Livingston worse than ever, of course, but he wasn't much tempted to go after Whit again. It was the girl, Melissa, who had started it. Joe thought about her—

After a spell of pondering, it occurred to him that he might even marry her. The more he thought about it, the more it appealed to him. José Felipe would make a fine husband! She would see that—or he hoped she would, anyway. But what of her father? Ah, there'd be the trouble! There was only one thing that interested Captain. That was money . . .

Well, Joe had the money! Gold pieces, in a small leather sack, hidden under the anvil. They were a memento of his sailing days, and how he got them was nobody's business.

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"Joe took the pouch out of his shirt front."

Joe trembled a little. It didn't matter, this way, if Melissa would have him or not: her father would have to see to that part of it. Yes, it was perfect . . . Joe smiled till it hurt him.

When he could talk, he waited on Captain, got him alone, and laid the business before him — no figure mentioned. Joe took a leather pouch out of his shirt front and dropped it onto the counter—keeping his eyes fixed on Captain. He saw Captain twitch at the soft clink of the money.

But Captain drew back. "No, Joe! No!"—his face all twisted up. "You take that stuff out o' here!"



"All of it gold, Captain . . ."

Joe raised his bag, and hefted it thoughtfully. "All of it gold, Captain. You like to see it? Maybe you want t' feel it?"

Joe loosened the drawstring, spilled a few gold pieces on the counter. Captain, was breathing hard. "Come in here," he rasped, "and don't leave that there layin' there, don't for God's sake! There ain't any tellin' who mightn't come in." He led the way to the tiny cubbyhole off the taproom that he liked to think of as his counting room. Joe followed after him.

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"We aim to go, sir . . ."



"He called to the first house he came to."

Whit, after a week or so, went to see Mr. Gowan. He told the minister about Melissa, and about their plans to go pioneering up north. Then he summoned his courage and he said what he'd come for: "Would you think you could marry us?"

Mr. Gowan was silent. He knew that he couldn't—not legally, anyhow—unless her father approved. "Tell me one thing," he said. "If I don't marry you, then what?"

Whit looked at him levelly. "We aim to go, sir."

"I see"—Gowan stood facing Whit.

"Bring her to me," he ordered roughly. "I'll marry you any time."

Whit hurried to tell Melissa the news. The next morning, he went north along the Merrimack, battling through the trackless wilderness for four days before he reached the new town of Sandwich where a few houses already had been built. He called to the first house he came to, and a tall, pleasant woman came out. Her husband followed. "Jonas Moore, at your service," he said, unsmilingly. "Whit Livingston, Kettleford. Your servant," Whit said. He spoke as coolly as the other man had.

"Come in and set down." It was Jonas'

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"Jonas invited Whit inside."



"Twelve miles to go..."

way of giving Whit a welcome. Whit took it as meant.

Working out of the Moore's house, Whit put in a week looking for a likely tract of land. And then one morning he saw the mountain. He saw it riding alone in the sky... just the gray, granite top with a touch of sun on it—and underneath it was sky, same as everywhere else. It lasted one terrible instant — beautiful, clear... and then it was gone again.

Whit's knees were shaking. "What I seen then," he said half aloud, huskily, "was a sign. I don't know what it means. I seen Coruway Mountain on top of the

weather... and God, wasn't she beautiful!" When he turned away, it was to gaze over the valley—a small interval—right down below. There it was! The land he was looking for. He knew it instinctively. This was the place.

Late in the afternoon, Whit was crossing a stream on the way back to the Moores' when a rock turned underneath him. He dragged himself clear and went to work on his ankle to see what happened. A bone was broken.

He cut himself a crutch, took a few steps and the crutch sunk in and stuck. He pulled it out and kept going. He had twelve miles to go...

— Look to the Mountain —



"A hand gripped the churn . . ."



"You need a man t' work for you."

At first slowly, then with a chill, indifferent swiftness, October seemed to spread out its days before Melissa—each was empty. She no longer cried out for Whit, but she'd found this to say to herself and she said it often: "All, right, he ain't come today. But he can come tomorrow. And even if he don't, it can't be no worse than today was. One day at a time like this I'd ought to be able to handle—for a while, I can, anyhow."

Melissa was repeating the words now, while she was churning. Suddenly she saw a great hand fix itself round the dasher. She looked up. . . It was Joe Felipe.

Melissa was frightened. She got outside somehow, and she had to sit down then because her knees wouldn't hold her. Joe finished churning the butter, and came out. "All done," he said soberly.

Melissa said, "Thank you, Joe"—although she shrank from his nearness.

"T'at ain' nothin'. You need a man t' work for you. I am a strong man—José Felipe."

Melissa said nothing. Captain Butler broke the silence finally, bawling from the casement where he'd been listening: "Joe! Look here a minute—" Joe went reluc-

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"'Josiah Potter, missionary,' he announced."

tantly, muttering, and Melissa hid in the barn until he had gone home again.

It was late in the afternoon before she ventured into the taproom. She was standing behind the counter when the door opened and a stranger came in. He was a big and ponderous creature—dressed all in black but for the dirty linen under his chin. Advancing toward Melissa like a one-man procession, he halted just short of the counter. "Josiah Potter, missionary," he proclaimed. He laid his huge hat on the counter, and leaned purposefully toward Melissa. Not greatly troubled that he wanted to kiss her, she drew back to



"Captain took the letter."

the wall. "Ah, but stay!" he advised her, reaching into his traveling cloak. "I have something here, child, which I brought for you."

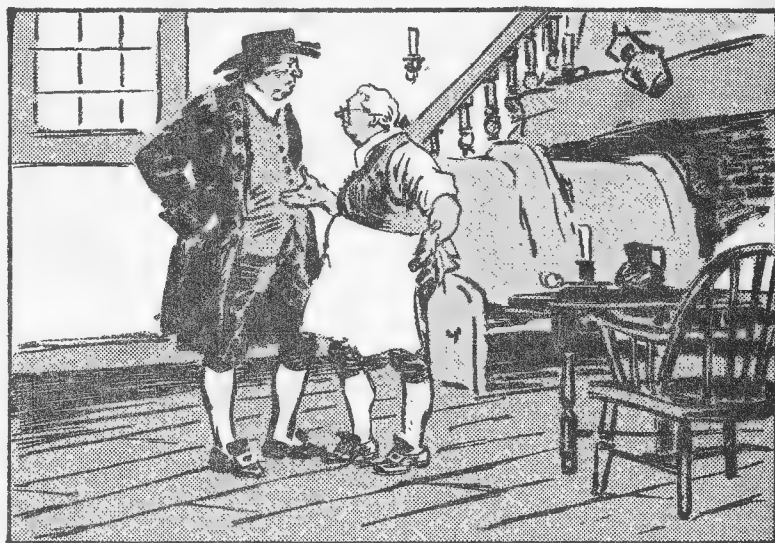
Melissa could feel no curiosity concerning any trinket that might come out of that cloak. She laughed and walked out.

It was to Captain Butler that Potter yielded up what he had in his pocket. "I have carried faithfully with me from Sandwich a letter," he said, "intended for your daughter, I think,"—and he handed it over.

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"It was from Whit . . ."



" 'I do wish you'd tell her,' Captain said wistfully."

Captain Butler accepted the letter that Josiah Potter offered. After a careful examination of the outside of the travel-worn paper, Captain agreed that it was meant for Melissa. Captain then opened it—first glancing at Potter, who appeared wholly uninterested. Even so, Captain explained, "She don't read very good."

The letter was from Whit Livingston. It told of the 100 acre tract he had arranged for; it told of his broken ankle, and of his eagerness to return to Kettleford and Melissa.

Slowly and carefully, Captain folded the letter . . . the presence of Potter com-

pletely forgotten. At length, Mr. Potter said the only thing that he could say. "No bad news, I trust?"

Captain came out of it. "Bad? Couldn't be worse, I guess. She's been jilted." There was a long silence. Finally Captain said wistfully, "I do wish that you'd tell her . . ."

"Why should I tell her?"

"Well, if I was to tell her, chances are in the first place that she wouldn't believe it."

"You have the letter."

"Sart'n I have! And she ain't goin' t' see it! This here's a cruel letter. 'Taint fit for a woman—let alone a girl."

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"Melissa heard every word of it . . . but it only came to her slowly what the man was saying."

After a few drinks of brandy, Potter agreed to break the news to Melissa, and that evening, sitting in the crowded tavern, he said loudly: "By the by, Captain Butler, I saw a man up north who claimed he'd come from Kettleford—Whit Livingston, his name was."

Melissa, coming up with a tray of toddies, stopped in her tracks. Only her father was watching her.

Ensign Lord commented, "Well, if Whit's made a pitch, I'll bet he's got him good land. He's seen enough of the other kind to know what that looks like." And

Potter remarked, "I trust the same explanation doesn't apply to the choice that he's made of a woman."

After a moment of silence, Ensign said, "What?"

"Yes, indeed!" affirmed Potter, "and as comely a wench as I saw in the Grants, sir."

Melissa heard every word of it. The sound of his name had sent a great upsurge of hope through her . . . and it only came to her slowly what the man's voice was saying. She recognized what the words meant . . . but the horror they builded was a thing gray and apart from her.

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"'Here, put t'is round you,' Joe said quietly."



"'M'lisha,' he said, 'I do love you.'"

At first it was beyond Melissa's belief that those things which Josiah Potter had spoken could be said of Whit Livingston. Her Whit . . . another woman . . . She heard the words spoken of him. But they didn't touch Whit. With her hands outstretched before her, she went toward the door.

Joe Felipe's long arm reached up and plucked Melissa's cape from its peg by the doorway. Out in the innyard, he caught up with her. "Here—put t'is round you," he said quietly. Melissa drew the cape around her and walked on. Joe followed after her. Suddenly he stopped and stood

facing her. "M'lisha," he blurted, "I do love you mos' awful, M'lisha!" He was shaken and hoarse. "Will you marry, M'lisha? . . . Oh, by God, but I hope so!"

"Joe—" her voice came to him steady and gentle—"Joe, I want you to go home now."

And it was borne in upon Joe—not in an instant, but slowly, while his jaw seemed to droop a little and he lost all his balance—that this little figure before him with her hair blown in the night wind—that she was stronger than he was. Joe did as she told him. "A'right," he said humbly. In the dark, very slowly, he went down the

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"In the dark, very slowly, Joé went down the road."



"She turned up her face to him . . ."

road. But before he'd gone far, he was getting back to himself again. He thought everything over. She hadn't said "No." Well, he'd go back there tomorrow and there was a chance that she'd have him. It was a chance that seemed to get better every time he came round to it, . . . José Felipe shook his fist at the sky and swore in pure jubilation.

As soon as Joe had walked away, Melissa hurried home and threw herself on her bed. She could not keep it back now. "Oh, God!—God, please bring Whit back!" It was hours before she slept.

The cockerel wakened her. She dressed,

went round the barn and down toward the meadow. Soon the sun would strike into it. Melissa wanted to be there.

Something seemed to move in the shadow ahead. All at once, Melissa knew, what she was looking at—she didn't quite dare say it—and then she couldn't help saying it: that was Whit—and Melissa was running . . .

Whit laid down his rifle and held out his arms to her—He felt so solid!—his arms hard in his shirt sleeves . . .

He held her a minute or two before she turned up her face to him, and found him looking down at her.

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"He can't hurt us now, Whit!"



"Whit was silent. Then: 'Joe ain't bothered you any?' "

The main question in Whit's mind concerning Melissa she had already answered: she appeared well and healthy. But suddenly Melissa grew serious. She told him about Josiah Potter. When she'd finished, Whit stood there thinking it over. The first thing he said was exactly what he was thinking, "I don't understand that. I don't know any Potter. I never heard of him. What the devil did he want to say that for!"

Melissa said nothing. Whit turned to pick up his rifle. "He still up at the tavern? I guess I'll go 'n talk to him."

"No, Whit! Don't! He can't hurt us now, Whit."

"No, I don't guess he can. Still, I'd kind a like my turn."

Melissa hoped that somehow between here and the tavern she could dissuade him. They started along, and after a silence Whit said, "My letter get through to you?"

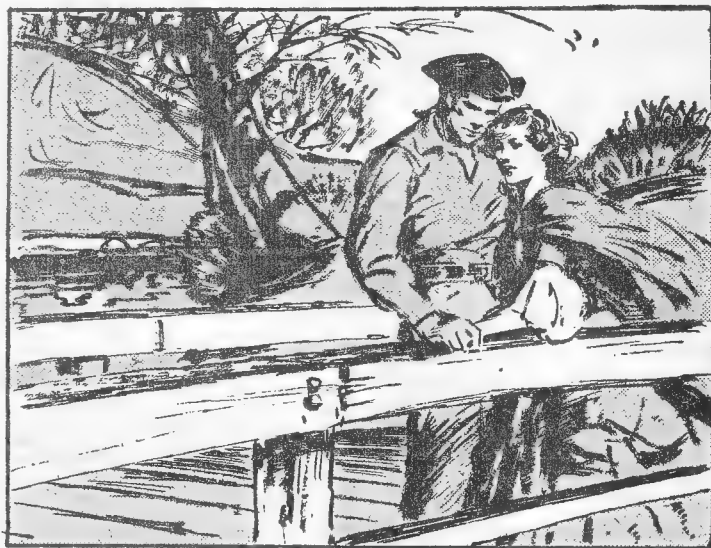
"A letter?" Before Melissa there opened the thought of what that would have meant to her.

"Well, I didn't know as 'twould, but I thought I might try it. I didn't want you to fret on account I was late, was all."

— Look to the Mountain —



"Joe wants to marry me . . ."



"Whit, d'you remember my mother?"

Whit was silent again. Then: "Joe ain't bothered you any?"

"Joe? No, he ain't bothered me. He ain't the same as he was, though. Joe wants to marry me."

"No!" Whit exclaimed in amazement. "Why, the—"

Melissa told him the whole story. Whit looked down at the ground. "Well, the first thing, I guess," he said to her presently, "is to go 'n get married."

"Yes, I guess we had better."

"'N then, after that, we ought to travel north. Only risk is, of course, that the river'll freeze. We got t' go by the river. A canoe 'n some luck'll get us to Sand-

wich. It might be better for you to winter in Sandwich. Anyhow, we c'n decide that after we get there. One way or another, I guess we c'n winter."

"We'll winter."

"Then it's settled. We'll leave the day after tomorrow."

Melissa fell silent. They started up toward the tavern—as they came to the bridge she said, "Whit, d' you remember my mother?"

"Yes, I remember her."

"I—I do, too."

Whit took hold of her hand—and she held on to his firmly.

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"He swung around, muttering."



"I'm going to marry Melissa."

When they reached the innyard Melissa sent Whit on up to the tavern while she stepped into the barn just to see to the feed and the water. Captain Butler had his back to the door as Whit entered.

"Mornin, Captain," Whit said to him. Captain swung around, he muttered some exclamation, and then he said half aloud, "Where 'd you come from?"

"Sandwich—'n round there."

Here in front of Captain there stood and awaited him the very great pleasure of informing this boy that Melissa was the next thing to married to good old Joe

Felipe! Captain wetted his lips as he ambled behind the counter. "Set down your rifle, my boy, and let me get suthin' for you. You look like you'd traveled."

"It's kind of you Captain, but I can't stay. I just came t' tell you Melissa and me is going to get married."

Captain's voice assumed a tone of disgusted amazement. "You stand there 'n tell me you're a-goin' t' marry M'lissa!" He leaned forward, his hands on the counter—"I *never* heard *nothin'* in my life t'-t' come up to it!"

Joe Felipe flung open the door at that

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"Joe Felipe flung open the door."

moment and to whomever the room might contain shouted lustily, "Mornin'!" José Felipe was everyone's friend today. Melissa hadn't said "No" to his marriage proposal. There was no telling how far he might get today with her...

He saw Whit standing there, and in friendly amazement swore at him in Portuguese. "Where'd you come from?" Joe asked.

"Upcountry," Whit answered. "You look pretty good, Joe."

"I feel good! I mow you today, Whit.



"Joe reached out for Captain."

You wouldn't catch me! Eh?" Joe turned to Captain. "Say, where's M'lissa?"

"Wait'll I get you th' brandy." Captain moved hastily.

Joe reached out for Captain and swung the little man round to him. "Never mind t'brandy! Where is M'lissa?"

Captain's wig was askew. "Upstairs in her chamber! Leave go of me, will you!"

"Quiet, little old man." Joe straightened his wig for him. "Now get me t' brandy."

Whit wasn't amused. He'd been a long time away. Joe hadn't used to bully Captain like that...

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit stood ready—the instant Joe made a move, he'd strike up with his rifle."

While Whit was trying to puzzle out the reason for Joe Felipe's new-found courage in bullying Captain Butler, Joe drank his brandy off in a swallow, set the glass down and turned to Captain. "See?" he said, "I don' like any jokes about 'where is M'lissa?'"

"Joe," Captain assured him, "you ain't goin' t' hear any. If there's any jokes goin' round, they won't be on you, Joe. But I can't say as much for Whit, there. You know what Whit has just up 'n told me? You listen to this, Joe—Whit has just up 'n told me that he's goin' t' marry M'lissa."

Joe swung around to Whit. Joe's arms

hung at his sides, and his head was drawn in and lowered. One look at his face—and Whit shifted his eyes to watching Joe's hands. The instant Joe made a move—for his knife or to close with him—Whit's right hand would go down and he'd strike up with his rifle.

Joe's fingers twitched—and Whit's hand began sliding, ever so gently, down the gun barrel. He felt like saying, "C'm on, Joe—" Joe bent his knees—Then Melissa's voice, "Well, Joe . . .?" She stood on the staircase above them.

The most Captain could do was to blink

— Look to the Mountain —



"It seemed to Whit a long ways to the door."



"Joe threw his knife—sailor fashion."

at her. Whit, for some reason, felt ashamed of himself; and Joe, seeing Melissa, went numb at the vision and simply gazed open-mouthed at her.

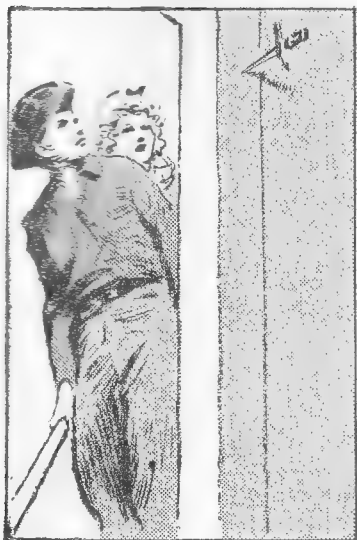
What she had seen was Whit—who was lame, hungry and tired—confronted by Joe and about to fight with him . . . and she could hear her shrill little father as he goaded Joe into it. Whit was the first one to move. He went to Melissa, and said gently, "You all ready, M'lissa?"—and he held his hand out to her.

It seemed to Whit a long ways from the stairs to the door . . . and in the last four

or five steps, when he couldn't see Joe, Whit wished in his belly that he never had tried this. Let Joe throw his knife and that'd be all there'd be to it. Joe was good with a knife. The skin on Whit's back, just under his shoulder blades, felt as though it were naked. But he kept his head up and he didn't look around any . . . and when he let go of Melissa's hand to open the door for her, he thought maybe they'd make it. Melissa stepped out and down onto the stone. She had passed from Joe's sight.

Joe threw his knife then—sailor fashion.

— Look to the Mountain —



"The knife quivered . . ."



"Gowan looked from one to the other. He was proud of them."

A cry came from Joe Felipe as he saw he was high with the knife that hurtled at Whit Livingston's back. It struck into the lintel, quivered, and drooped.

Whit shut the door and caught up with Melissa. Halfway to Mr. Gowan's, he thought of telling Melissa how she looked awful pretty dressed out in that cap and all. He decided to tell her.

From there to the minister's dooryard, Melissa wasn't quite sure whether her feet touched the ground or not.

"Well," Mr. Gowan said after he had greeted them, "I guess there's no question as to what you came for . . ."

Whit grinned in response. And Melissa smiled happily.

The minister looked from one to the other. He was proud of them both. "I'm glad you have come," he said.

Sitting before the fire, Mr. Gowan heard the whole story of Potter, Captain Butler and Joe Felipe. He decided that it might not be so difficult to get Captain's consent to the marriage, after all. A suggestion to Captain that the town wouldn't like the way he'd been trying to fix it so Melissa would marry Joe, a Portygee, might have some effect—especially if it was coupled with a hint of tar

— Look to the Mountain —



"... Amen," the minister finished. "Amen," said the people."

and feathers. As for the requirement of three weeks' publication of the banns—well, tonight was Lecture Night; he'd ask the townfolks to waive that requirement. Mr. Gowan outlined his plan to Whit and Melissa, and set off to see Captain.

Following Lecture that night, Mr. Gowan told the assemblage about the banns problem, and called for a vote. Ensign Lord roared, "All in favor, say aye!" They rocked the church with it.

In a quiet—by contrast more notable—the minister married them. "... Amen," he finished. "Amen," said the people.

Whit and Melissa walked down the

road from the church. The sound of the people faded behind them. Whit struggled to speak. "M'lissa, I'm sorry I ain't got no place t' take you."

She stopped in the road, and she put her hands up to him. "Whit, I don't care!—not so long as you take me."

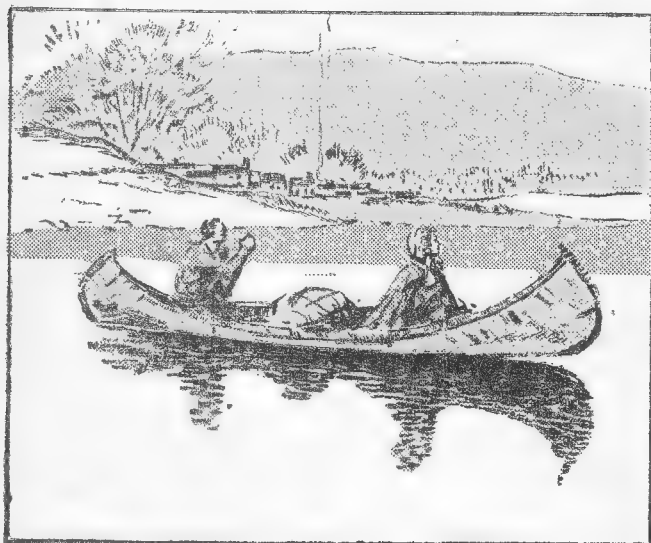
Whit couldn't answer. He drew her to him.

"You think that tomorrow, Whit, we c'n get started?"

"Tomorrow or next day, I shouldn't wonder."

The rest of the way, Whit holding her hand, she went forward in silence.

— Look to the Mountain —



"The town slipped behind them . . ."



"Whit drove ahead—he had to!"

Whit and Melissa were out on the river, in the long quiet reach where the river spreads out above the falls. "Well," Whit said, "now we got started, next thing is t' git there." He could feel a great uplift. Melissa was with him. The town was behind them. He paddled easy, as a man is apt to do at the start of a day or a journey. But they made good headway, and by late midafternoon, the river had narrowed. The current was strong now. Whit was working his way through the rocks, planning and figuring, taking no chances.

For some distance ahead it was too fast on his side of the river and there were too

many boulders. But he didn't see any place for getting across. . . . There would have been a good place except for an elm tree that had got hung up on a rock out there. Well, he'd have to go around it.

When he got out there between the tree and the rocks, he found he didn't have as much room as he'd thought he was going to. His paddle touched an underwater branch, then another, but he drove ahead—he had to!

Melissa's small toes curled up in her shoes. She was leaning forward and her hands gripped the gun'l. She had to sit there, just part of the weight Whit was

— Look to the Mountain —



"Melissa reached out for the twig . . ."



"She was hurt. She had wanted to help."

trying to lift. Directly ahead was a twig that looked stout enough for her to lay hold on and help pull them along. Melissa reached out for it. "Stop that!" Whit yelled at her, and she jumped back, startled.

They reached safe water finally and Whit poled with his paddle. "That danged old elm tree," he said to Melissa, "couldn't a picked a worse place. 'Twas narrow in there. You feel me touch them two branches down in under the water?"

She shook her head.

Whit looked at her. "What's the matter?" he asked.

She was sitting up straight. "Nothin'."

Whit thought back till he came to it. Then he said honestly, "F you'd a been pullin' against that twig, 'n it had come off in your hand, 'n you'd fell over backward, *then* where'd we a been? I *had* to yell at you."

"Well, you don't have to now."

Whit took his time about answering. "No, that's right, I guess. Well, nothin' happened."

She was still hurt. She had wanted to help.



— Look to the Mountain —



"The water was beginning to freeze."



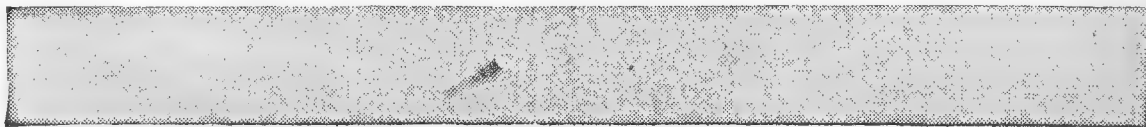
"They made the Forks before dark and camped there."

Whit and Melissa paddled steadily up the Merrimack by day, and slept in the open on the river bank by night. They had good weather up to the time they pushed on past Contoocook River and camped at the mouth of Mill Brook. Then it turned cold. Whit left the fire and went down to look at the river. He swished his hand in the dark water. This was the beginning of freezing, but the ice wouldn't cause any trouble until maybe tomorrow. All right. By that time, they'd be to the Forks, and when he got there he'd have to make up his mind about what to do. . . . Well, it turned on the weather—like everything

else. He lay down near the fire and slept.

Out on the river again before daylight was full, they made the Forks before dark and stayed there for the night. Melissa was still asleep the next morning when Whit, wakened by hunger, threw off his blanket and busied himself round the fire. He made up some breakfast, then wakened Melissa. After she'd eaten, he said to her soberly, "I want to look at your feet."

"My feet?" Melissa asked. "You ain't touched, are you?" She thrust out her feet in stockings and moccasins. "Didn't seem



— Look to the Mountain —



"Your moccasins wouldn't last half a day . . ."



"We'll be all right, M'lissa."

to me yesterday we had any sun—although you did go bareheaded. All right: look at 'em."

Whit came and knelt down by her. He explained where they were and what risks they faced. "I'd figured that now with the ice on the river, maybe we'd better go through the woods. But I hadn't figured your feet'd be soft."

"I can walk all right, Whit!"

"Them moccasins you got wouldn't last half a day when the ground's frozen hard. No, sir. We'll go by the river, ice

or no ice. If the canoe gets slit open, I can patch it."

"But s'pose'n it sinks, Whit."

"Then I'll haul you out on the bank. 'Twon't be near such a haul as 'twould be t' lug you from here into Sandwich."

He put his hand on her shoulder. "We'll be all right, M'lissa."

"I ain't helpin' you much."

"You're helpin' me this much: that if you hadn't come, I wouldn't a started—'n I don't mean only this trip; I wouldn't never got nowheres."

"You'd a got somewheres. All right, then: the river!"

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit felt the canoe bottom rip—and over they went."

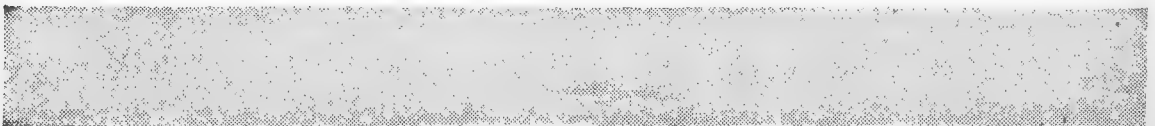
Branching off the Merrimack into Squam Brook, Whit and Melissa found it much smaller even than that narrowing part of the river on which they'd been for the last day or two. Whit paddled through swift water, past a small island. It was a narrow, dark place, overgrown on the left bank with alder and maple, while the bank on his right rose as high as two houses.

About halfway through, he turned sick as he felt the bow sliding up on a log that was under water. He put all he had into a try to back water, his fingers spread on the blade. He felt the canoe bottom rip. The canoe heeled to the left, Melissa

grabbed for the side—and over they went.

Whit made a lunge for her—and missed, as he went into the water. The current sucked him under the log. He came up twenty feet downstream and saw Melissa's head just emerging. He struck out wildly to reach her, but she was swept in to the bank—and safe from drowning, at least—before he got to her. Whit stood up in the water at the foot of the bank, but Melissa couldn't stand up. She was coughing and weak, and there was blood on her face where she had a cut. She didn't appear to know Whit was there.

He dragged her up the steep bank and



— Look to the Mountain —



"'You got to keep moving,' he warned."



"Whit tried to encourage her . . ."

laid her down. Inside of five minutes, she was able to stand. What he had to do now was to get a fire going. He asked Melissa if she could keep moving if he went to try for his gun.

She nodded her head.

"You got to," he said. "Don't you sit down. You understand?" Even to look at her made him feel sick himself—her head drooping forward, and her face of no color, and the blood on her cheek.

Whit went to the river, found the canoe and dove into the freezing water again and again for his knife, his powder horn and his rifle. He kept it up until neither

his brain nor his legs would work. Then he rested a bit, and stumbled back to Melissa.

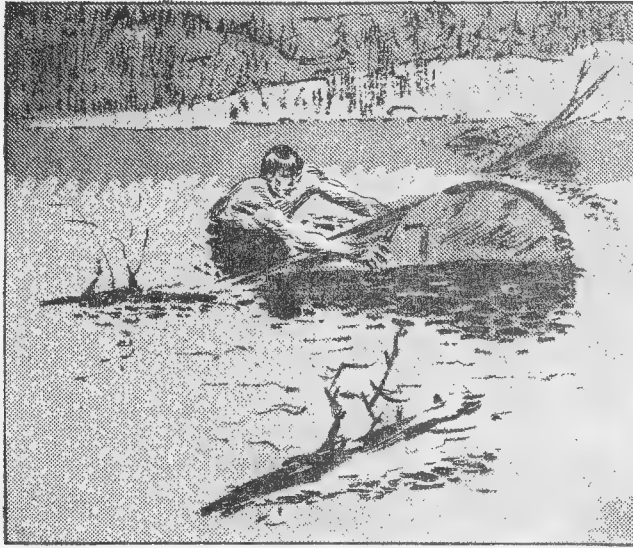
Whit tried to encourage her. "You feel any warmer?"

She nodded dimly.

"All right, you stay here by the fire. I'll be back in a minute. I got an errand to do."

He'd got to go into the water again, because without any ax he'd never be able to keep ahead of the fire. And without a fire . . . well, Melissa would never be able to keep ahead of the cold . . .

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit plunged in to get the canoe."



"He made it—but he didn't know how."

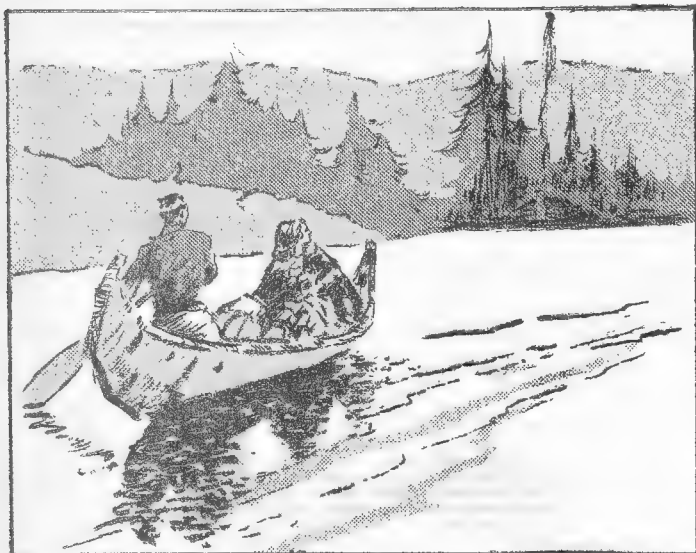
Whit went down to the river, and plunged into the icy water. He got his ax, and laid it out on the bank. He got their small iron pot. And he struggled some time with the half a sack they had left of Indian meal. Somehow, he dragged it up out of the water—and then he fell on the bank under a sudden downthrust of exhaustion. Pretty soon he was able to stand.

He went once again into the water, hauled the canoe out, and salvaged a line. Kneeling, he tied the ax and the pot to it, and the other end of the line he tied to his belt. Then he slit open the meal sack,

and fumbled into his pockets as much as he could of the wet Indian meal. Slowly, he started to crawl up the bank. He made it—but he didn't know how. Stupidly, half drunk with exhaustion, and unaware of his triumph in gaining the top of the bank, he sat on the edge with his legs hanging over, and solemnly hauled up the ax and the pot. Then he went a little unsteadily back to the fire where Melissa lay.

All that night long, Whit never lay down. He kept up the fire, and tended Melissa. He used every trick that he'd ever heard of to fight the cold from her.

— Look to the Mountain —



"'That smoke,' said Melissa, 'is that where we're goin'?' "



"Whit kissed her—said nothing."

They stayed there all the next day. Whit patched the canoe and dried out his gear. Melissa lay there and rested, gaining back her strength.

The following morning, they set out again. Toward sundown, to the north, Whit saw the smoke of the houses of Sandwich. It gave him a catch in his throat. He couldn't speak for a moment.

"That smoke—" said Melissa, "is that where we're goin'?"

"That's it," he answered.

Jonas Moore's house was right down by the water. Jonas was standing on the lit-

tle beach, waiting. He exchanged greetings with Whit while he steadied the bow and helped Melissa alight. His hand on her arm felt strong and reliable. She liked Jonas Moore.

Whit introduced Melissa, and Jonas observed to him in an unrestrained voice, "She ain't awful big, is she?"

"No," said Whit, "but she's rugged."

Jonas led the way up the path. Melissa went slowly. Then she turned around to Whit—and Jonas kept going.

She put her arms up to him. Whit kissed her—said nothing.

Then they followed Jonas.

— Look to the Mountain —



"'Child,' Ida said, 'you do as I say!'"



"Whit looked at the mountain—it hadn't changed any."

Pity moved Jonas Moore's wife Ida when she looked at Melissa. This hollow-eyed, staring, unsmiling child was so far beaten down by her journey that she didn't even know she was dirty. So Mistress Moore drove the men out and went to work on Melissa.

"Child," she said, "I'm twice as old as what you be. You just take it easy and do as I say. I'm goin' t' git them clothes off'n you—they look like you been in the river."

"We overset. 'Twasn't his fault."

"No, I guess that's right. Accidents happen. Jonas claims Whit's an awful good man."

Soon Melissa was bundled up in Ida Moore's clothes. The men came back, they talked a while and then went to bed. Melissa lay wide awake. Tomorrow, she knew, Whit was leaving her here. But sleep came, finally—she was too tired to think any more.

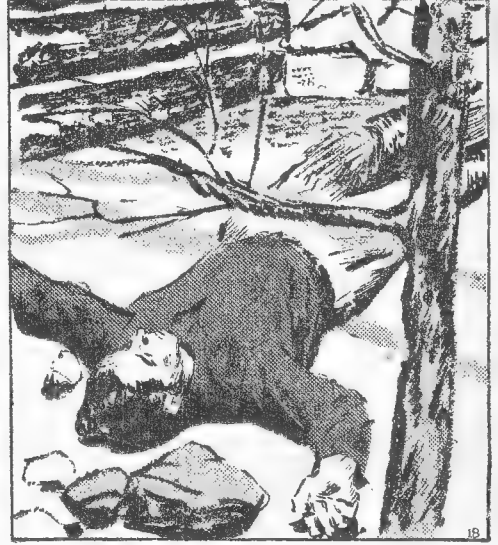
Whit got away early next morning. When he reached his tract of land, he shucked off his load and looked up at the mountain. . . . It hadn't changed any.

The house Whit had in mind would be six lengths of his ax handle, and half that in depth. He marked it out, built himself

— Look to the Mountain —



"Jonas helped lay up the house."



"He lay there—unconscious."

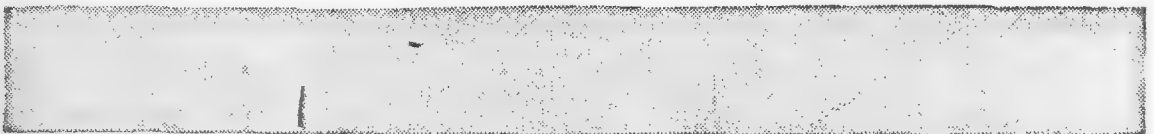
a lean-to, and then set to work cutting the logs. Eight days from the day on which he started, he had them all cut. Jonas came to help him lay up the house and put on the roof, but the building of the chimney was a task Whit reserved for himself. Shifting the stones, laying them this way and that, he went ahead slowly. It was solid and true.

While there was light, he scarcely stopped for a second. When he lay down at night, he could touch the edge of sleep only. All day and all night, he had that chimney in front of his eyes, and he had

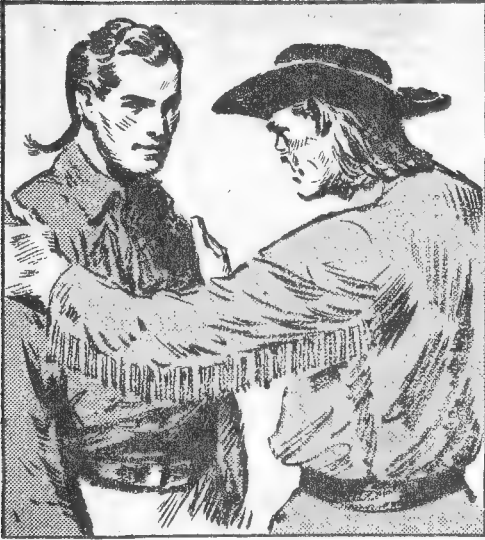
the feel of the stones on the flat of his fingers.

Up on the roof, he worked now like a man in a dream. He hadn't eaten for a day and a half, but that didn't matter. Because an odd thing had happened: he didn't need to eat any more.

He put the last stone in place, and he knew he had finished it . . . and he knew what to do next. He must get down off the roof and down onto the ground. He slid off the edge, landed weakly, staggered back, and his heel catching a rock, he fell. His head struck on a rock and he lay there—loose-jointed, unconscious.



— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit showed no sign of recognition."



"He gulped the thin, greasy liquid greedily."

Jonas Moore picked up his rifle and told his wife and Melissa that he was going hunting—he'd be back tomorrow, most likely. Ida Moore didn't have to catch his eye. She knew where he was going. Whit was overdue now; it was up to Jonas to look for him.

Jonas was about a mile from Whit's place when he saw Whit coming toward him—no gun, no nothing, just walking slowly. Whit came almost up to him before Jonas spoke. "Hello, Whit."

That stopped him. But there was no sign in Whit's face that he'd ever seen Jonas.

"I finished t' chimbley. Where's Melissa?" Whit asked dully. He started to speak again, but Jonas forestalled him. "Come on," Jonas ordered. "I'll take you to Melissa."

He got Whit turned around, and he led him back to Whit's place. Jonas kindled a fire in the lean-to, and made some broth. Whit gulped the thin, greasy liquid greedily. Then he dropped off into a restless sleep.

Later on in the evening, Whit seemed to sleep evenly, so Jonas decided he would rest some himself. Jonas lay down by the fire . . . "Where's M'lissa?" he says t'

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit was outside, clutching a tree for support."

me. 'Where is M'lissa?' He had to find her! 'I finished t' chimbley. Where is M'lissa?' Lord, if he wanted her that bad, why didn't he come out 'n see her?—'stead of stayin' round here t' finish t' chimbley. *She* hadn't said to him 'It's chimbley or nothin'.' Nor he hadn't promised her. He ain't the kind to say what he will do—not till after he's done it. He makes up his mind, 'n then he goes 'n does it, 'n then he says—at the *most* he says, 'Well, I done it, I guess'—'n then he don't even get drunk. *I* couldn't live that way!"

....and a half-minute later, "You know, he *has* got an awful nice chimbley." And Jonas settled in sleep.

Jonas was up at daybreak, tending the fire. Whit sat up slowly and painfully, and announced: "I c'n travel."

"You could," Jonas answered without turning around, "if we had a stagecoach run from here out to my place. You ain't go'n t' walk, though—not today, I c'n tell you."

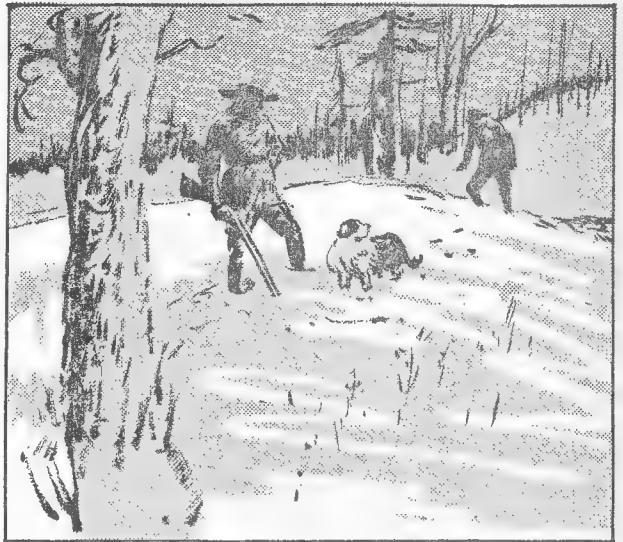
There was a silence. Jonas heard a noise, and looked around. Whit was supporting himself against a tree in front of the lean-to. "I'm setting out," he said.

Jonas stood up—and then turned to the fire. He kicked it apart. "All right," he said, "I'm comin' with you."

— Look to the Mountain —



"Melissa ran out into the darkness."



"Whit knew if he lay down, he'd never get up."

Ida Moore and Melissa had sat up later that evening than there was any occasion for. Both were worried because Jonas had not yet brought Whit back. But neither would admit it.

"Hark!" Melissa said suddenly—and held up her hand.

She ran out into the darkness that lay on the clearing. Close at hand was Jonas's voice: "Eve'nin', M'lissa."

"I can't see you. Whit—are you there?"

Whit said, "Hello—" but it didn't sound like him.

"Whit's kinda tuckered," Jonas explained. "He can tell you about it. I'm goin' in 'n see Ida."

Jonas found his wife busy with bellows and poker before a quickening fire. He plunged into his story. "A more pigheaded youngster than that fool in th' clearin' I never see in my life. You know how we been travelin'? Ten rod 'n then stop! 'Whit,' I says, 'lay down 'n rest, will ye?' But he wouldn't do it: he'd hang on to a tree for a spell maybe, 'n then he'd go on. He knowed well as I did if he was t' lay down, he wouldn't get up."

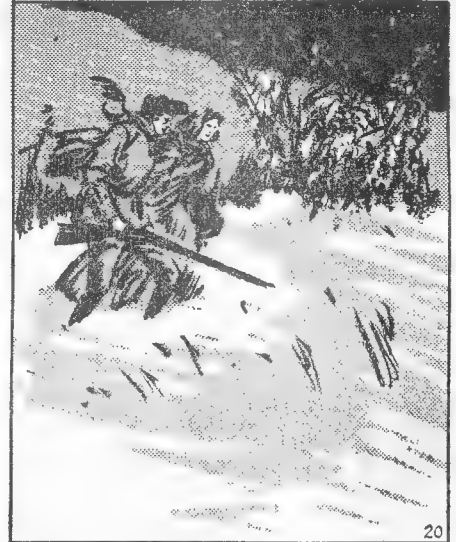
Ida broke in: "You'd better get them inside here."

Melissa saw the light suddenly come from the opened doorway.

— Look to the Mountain —



"They got him into bed and kept him there."



"They stumbled off the trail . . ."

"We can go to our place to live," Whit said to her quietly, "any time that you're ready."

Jonas called to them.

They got Whit into bed and kept him there for several days. About noon of a bright day in December, they finally left Jonas's. Forging steadily ahead through the woods, they reached old man Poole's by dark, and stayed there overnight. They set off again at sunup—this was the day they'd be in their own house!

They hadn't traveled long when Whit heard overhead the first hiss of snow. Soon

it got harder to see, and he felt some annoyance because he'd neglected to spot any trees along this part of the route. The wind rose and the cold bit into them. They stumbled off the trail, lost some ground, finally got their bearings again. Suddenly Whit stopped. "We got four miles to go yet," he said. "Do you want to try it? I c'n fix you up pretty good so's you c'n rest here. Do you want to do that—or keep goin'?"

She thought before answering . . . while Whit watched her face carefully.

"I want t' keep goin'."

— Look to the Mountain —



"They saw the cabin—still and white."



"Melissa opened her eyes—'Where are we now?'"

Whit raised his voice so Melissa could hear him over the fury of the snow-laden wind. "All right," he said, "if you want t' keep goin', we will."

As they plodded on, Melissa had no measure of distance except the passage of time. She was making the motions of walking, but if Whit had let go of her, she'd have slumped in a heap.

Whit was searching the swirl of snow in front of his eyes and the grayness beyond it for the shape of his house. Then he saw it: still and white, there it was. . . .

Coming up to the doorway, he set down his gun, picked up Melissa, and carried her in. "We got here," he said.

Melissa opened her eyes—"Where are we now?" Her voice didn't sound very big. "Whit—We're in the house!"

With Melissa beside him, he knelt on his hearth and kindled a fire, the cold and darkness behind him.

Melissa slept warm that night. The next morning they went out hand in hand, silently, to look at their land, their wooded acres—and the mountain. Then Melissa settled into the routine of housekeeping. Melissa was the one who kept count of the days after that. She had reason to—a baby was on the way. She added the days

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit's gun provided food through the winter."



"She'll be all right, Whit."

into the weeks and knew how many she'd done with . . . and she knew how many weeks lay ahead between her and her time. Whit, on the other hand, watched the winter go by. He told off its progress by the sun creeping north, by the frost in the trees that made the maples like iron to threaten his ax. He kept them in meat, he trapped, and now and then he'd bring in a mess of fish from the pond.

The morning that Melissa announced that this was now April, Whit said, well, if that was the case, he'd got to make a trip out. He wanted to trade his fur for some things Melissa would need. And he

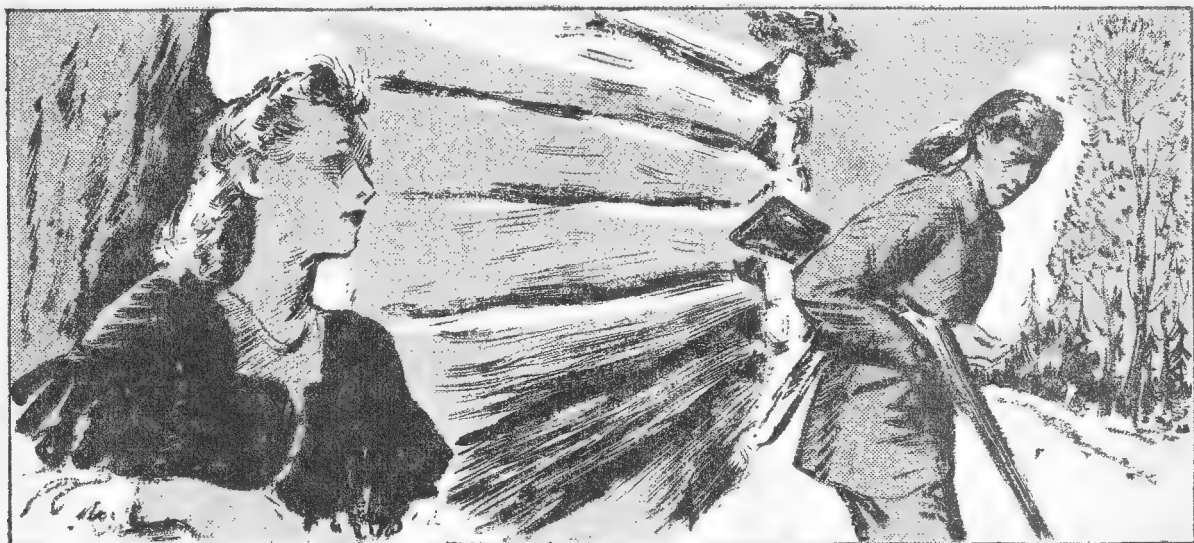
wanted to arrange for Ida Moore to come and stay with Melissa when her time arrived.

True to her word, Ida Moore put in her appearance on the first day of May. Jonas was with her, and he and Whit wandered outside to talk. "Well," Jonas said, "Ida figures to stay till your woman's well again. As for me, I could stay for a while—if you think you could stand it."

"I could stand it!"

Jonas looked round at him. "Don't you go to worry. She'll be all right."

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit got his gun and swung off through the clearing . . ."

Ida Moore took over most of the housework from Melissa, and Jonas helped Whit with his chores. The days passed that way, and then one morning Whit stood in the doorway and saw that this was really the spring. There was in the air a sure, confident softness; there was the feel and color of spring. Whit went in, asked Melissa if she felt all right, and heard her say that she did. "I thought I might go a little ways in the woods," he said. "I'll fix it with Jonas to know where I am."

She poked at the fire. . . . "All right," she said.

He got his gun and swung off through the clearing, toward the brook. From there he struck southeasterly.

He had expected that for all of this day the presence of spring would occupy everything. It had done so in the past. But as the hours went by he kept thinking of Melissa, and he was no longer contented. Something was missing . . . and he knew what it was! he was wishing that somehow or other Melissa could share this.

He stopped suddenly, and said aloud, "I'm going back."

As he came into the clearing, Whit saw Jonas Moore with two empty buckets

— Look to the Mountain —



"'Stand back, boy, I've got work to do!'"

picking his way down the path that led to the brook. Whit hurried to join him.

"Stand back, boy!" said Jonas. "I got work t' do here." He dipped in a bucket. "Your wife's had a baby."

Jonas looked up—and saw Whit was halfway to the house.

Ida Moore heard him coming and remarked for Melissa, "I guess this is him now"—and Melissa scraped into a little pile all the strength she could find and resolved to spend the whole of it on one effort for Whit. She heard him come in the doorway, and she saw his face just above her. Now was the time! and she



"She felt his hand close on hers . . ."

smiled and raised her hand to him. She felt the hardness and roughness of Whit's hand close on hers—and she smiled without trying to. . . . Then she let her eyes close.

She felt Whit kiss her forehead—and when he let go her hand, she was glad that he did. . . .

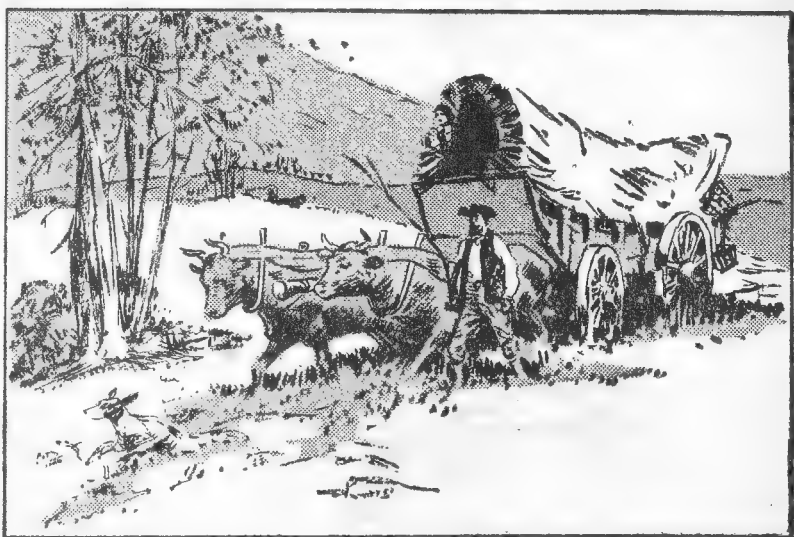
Whit went outside. Mrs. Moore followed him. "He's a fine young one, Whit." She put her hand on his shoulder. "Whit, everything is all right."

He went off toward the lean-to in back of the house, his knees feeling weak, and with a beginning of joy in his heart. . . .

— Look to the Mountain —



"He traded furs with Beede."



"Other settlers came during the summer . . ."

All through that summer and all through the autumn, and month after month as the winter went on, over the whole township of Tamworth there was no house except theirs. Whit had kept his word better than the Proprietors had—no other settlers, no sign of a road, and the town not surveyed. Even the cow that the Proprietors *had* agreed to in writing, they hadn't lived up to.

Whit decided that it was time he had at least a calf. So he went to see Daniel Beede, the Proprietors' agent in Sandwich, and got one in trade for some furs and a promise of three days of labor. As

Whit was leaving, Beede said to him, "I hear you're goin' t' have neighbors."

"Who are they?" asked Whit.

"Philbrick and Eastman, and Jackman and Choate."

Whit didn't know them. He wanted to ask if they were good men. But he guessed that wouldn't do.

What Beede said proved to be partly right—the four men came during the summer, but they didn't stay through the winter. That is, they came to Tamworth; Philbrick was the only one who actually came to Whit's house. Whit liked Phil-

— Look to the Mountain —



"They gazed at the smoke from the neighborly chimneys and were happy."

brick and so did Melissa. They were sorry to see him go.

Once again they faced winter without any neighbors. Melissa had thought she'd be used to it now. But with the trees wet and black in the month of November and the whole winter to come, she knew she was afraid. They fought the winter—day after day. They thought in March they were winning. But then Whit took a chill, and fever followed. He was barely able to stand on his feet when Melissa took her turn—and before she was out of it, the baby had sickened. Whit took care of them both. By the time they were better, it was spring.

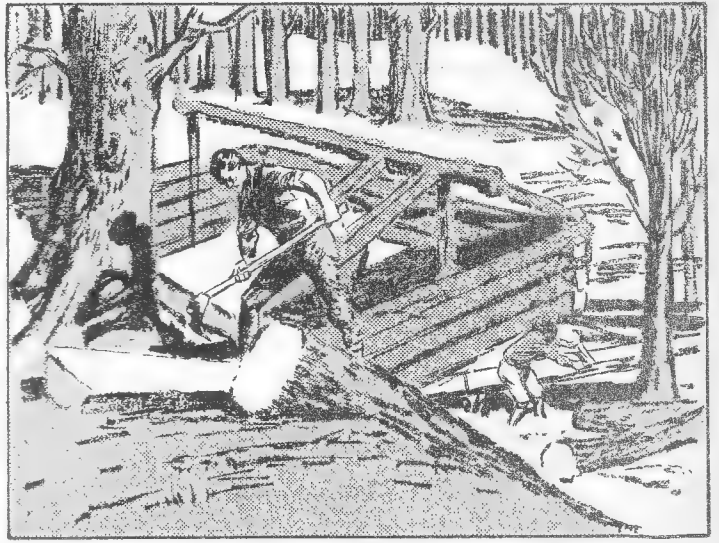
The town began to show progress. Eastman, Choate and Jackman—who had spent the winter in Sandwich—came onto their land again. And others were said to be planning to come. There was no question now but what the town would be settled. If things kept on this way, they might get a mill before very much longer. Not right away, maybe, but in two or three years. Or even a blacksmith.

Whit and Melissa gazed across the wooded intervals at the thin wisps of smoke from the neighborly chimneys around them and were happy.

— Look to the Mountain —



"... she had a good head on her."



"Together, they built a barn on Whit's place."

David Philbrick came back onto his land in July. He came alone, looking cheerful and well, as though he had wintered in plenty. Whit and Melissa found out what it was in a matter of minutes: he had married a wife. He said he'd got a real good one—a great woman to work. She was a young woman, he said—about sixteen, he should think—but she had a good head on her.

Whit helped Philbrick build a house not far from his own, but throughout that autumn of 1772 and the winter that followed, Whit hunted alone. Philbrick wasn't a hunter. It was nice having a man

like him nearby, though. Working together, they built a log barn on Whit's place, and they put a floor in the cabin made of hewn logs.

What Whit wanted most was oxen and boards. If he had oxen, he could plow. And if he had boards, he could build a new house.

Melissa, meantime, was expecting again.

It was a fine, frosty night well on in October when Melissa wakened her husband and said she guessed he'd better go get Mary Philbrick—that is, unless he'd rather stay there and be a midwife himself.

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit got Mary Philbrick in quick time."

He made the trip through the woods to Philbrick's and back faster that night than he'd ever done it by daylight.

A little before dawn, Melissa told Whit that she guessed he'd better take up the youngster, Jonas, and go outside the house, "—and take something to eat for him, and mind he ain't cold."

Whit went unseeing out of the doorway, and though freed of the house he didn't feel the night round him. At the edge of the woods across the clearing he set the boy down and made up his fire. There were enough things could go wrong so that it was hard to keep his mind



"You ain't cold . . . ?"

off them. He wished Ida Moore was here.

The boy was running round busily gathering up hemlock cones in the light from the fire. He was three and a half—his hair loose almost to his shoulders. Whit was pleased with him.

Whit said, "You ain't cold?"

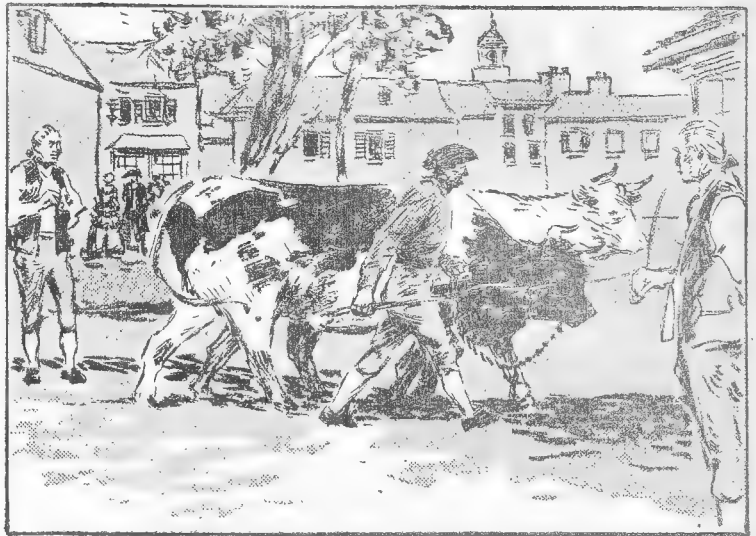
The boy shook his head. "When is Ma comin'?"

Whit realized then that for the past half a minute the weight of his thoughts of Melissa had been lifted from him. "We'll go up there later," he said. "Here—" and he reached for his bag—"here's some johnnycake for you."

— Look to the Mountain —



"War seemed so far away . . ."



"Beede noticed that Whit didn't have his gun with him."

Hez Hackett, the hunter, stopped by in November. He admired the new baby. "He-one, ain't it?" he said to Whit. "That's what I heard. Now you got two of 'em."

They talked about hunting, then, and things in general. Hackett mentioned some trouble the folks were having with the Britainers down in Boston, but Whit didn't pay much attention. It seemed so far away.

After that, Whit and Melissa didn't see anybody except their near neighbors until spring. They came to a morning that was the middle of May, and there was still no

word from Jonas Moore. This was the day Whit was going to Sandwich to fetch in the oxen he had agreed with Daniel Beede to buy. He told Melissa that he'd go down and see Jonas and find out how things stood.

But Whit only stayed with Jonas a few minutes before going on to Beede's. He wanted his oxen; he wanted to know they were his.

Beede noticed that Whit didn't have his gun with him, and as Whit was leaving the yard at the head of the near ox, his goad carried forward and his face very

— Look to the Mountain —



"The militia done well. They kill't more'n you'd think for."

solemn, Beede said to him, "Now you look like a farmer!"

When Whit got home he had news for Melissa. "They been fighting t' Boston," he said morosely. "A proper battle, same as 'twould be in a war. Britainer soldiers 'n militia."

"Who won?"

"Soldiers, I guess. They was on top at the finish. But the m'litia done well. They kill't more'n you'd think for."

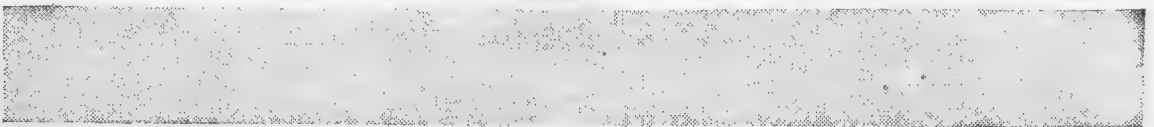
"Right in Boston?"

"Handy to it, I guess. 'Twas up on a hill. Wait now—Breed's Hill."

They didn't hear any more about the fighting until word came through that the

British had burned Falmouth—seventy miles to the east from Whit's place. Falmouth didn't all burn, but it burned pretty well. A good many Portsmouth people thought that they might be next. They loaded their things into carts and went back into the country—away from the sea-coast, where they would be safe.

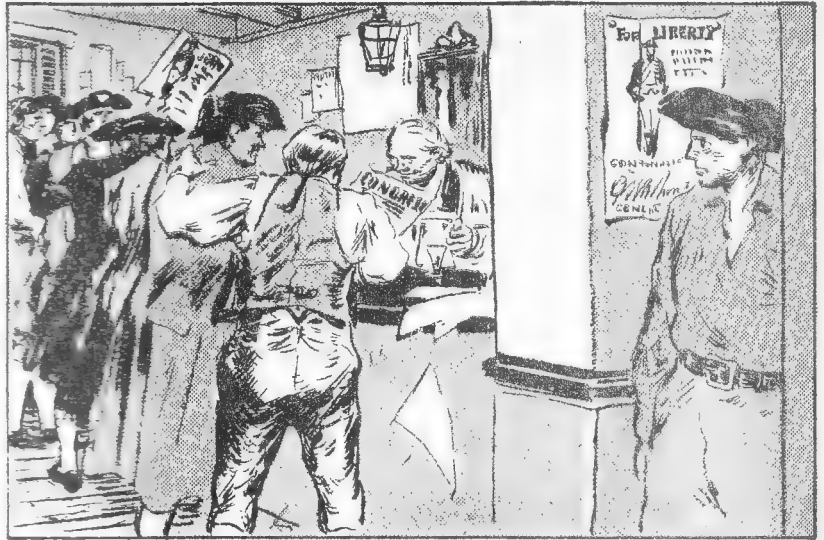
Between Tamworth and Falmouth there was nothing but woods. There were no rivers to follow, they ran more to the south. No one in Tamworth had ever seen Falmouth. Still—the war was getting close . . .



— Look to the Mountain —



"Heard about Independence?"



"There was a lot of treating when they heard how Congress voted."

Jonas and Ida Moore came over to Whit's place for a visit in February. Whit showed Jonas his barns and his growing herd of cattle, and then they went back to the house to sit by the fire. "Heard any talk about Independence, and so on?" Jonas asked.

"Why, yes, now and then, of course. Not a gre' deal."

"Which side are you on?"

"I ain't on either. It don't make any difference to me."

"You heard they'd hauled cannon clear over from Ti and drove all the Britainers out of Boston, I guess."

"Bostoners or Britainers, there ain't much to choose."

After Jonas and Ida went home, Whit didn't have much time to think about such far away matters through the rest of the winter and the spring planting season. But there were quite a few men who, the second week in July when they heard that the Congress had voted for Independence—Liberty and Freedom, and all that kind of thing—appeared to think it important. Over in Sandwich there was a good deal of treating. Whit heard the news of how the Congress had voted when Hez Hackett, the hunter, brought it. And Hackett

— Look to the Mountain —



" 'Maybe we'll get somewhere now,' Hackett said."



" 'Nobody knew how the army lasted the winter.'"

added the comment, "Maybe we'll get somewhere now."

"Why?" Whit asked him bluntly. "You think this Indian corn's goin' t' come on any better whether it's New Hampshire Province or New Hampshire State? And where's your Independence if you got t' tie up with Yorkers, Virginians and Connecticut people, and—and, well, whoever the rest of 'em be?"

Hackett said he didn't know, and the discussion ended.

Whit and Melissa continued to hear of the war off and on through the summer, but it still was away off in the south. There were a thousand men killed, so they heard

in August, in a fight at a place called Long Island.

General George Washington's little army was forced to retreat again and again after battles with the Britainers. His forces had to withdraw from New York along in September. And nobody knew how his cold and hungry army kept together when winter closed in.

But whatever their reasons these men hung on. And then one night in December, they dashed across a river and made a surprise attack on a strong force of Hessians. They killed all the Hessians they could lay their hands on.

This was on Christmas Day. It kept the war going.

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit, the Britainers have taken Fort Ti!"

The winter passed slowly, but spring, with its plowing and land clearing, slipped away in quick time. It was mid-July now, and Whit had just come back from his first try for pickerel. As he entered the house, Melissa said to him, "Whit, there was a man come by here while you was down to the pond—he said the Britainers have taken Fort Ti."

Whit was silent and thoughtful as he put his tackle away.

"Where is Fort Ti, Whit?" Melissa asked. "I never knew rightly."

"Hundred and fifty mile west, I should think."



"They got Indians with them . . ."

"Will the Britainers come over here?"

"No"—and he got up and walked slowly out the door.

Whit wasn't concerned about the Britainer soldiers; they'd move slowly. And they weren't headed this way. Indians, though.

Melissa came up. "Whit, why won't they come here?"

"Nothin' t' bring 'em. They head for big towns."

"I heard they got Indians, Whit."

Whit took the short route. "Yes, I heard the same thing," he said. "No one knows if it's true. I ain't sure that it is."

"Two hundred mile," she said, "ain't

— Look to the Mountain —



"She could see Whit was troubled." "... then the hard pain of leaving her took away any thoughts."

much to an Indian. I know what they do, Whit; the burnin' and the torture. When I think of them comin' I turn sick."

Whit steered the talk into other channels, but the next day he went over to Sandwich to get more information. When he got back, Melissa could see that he was troubled.

"Well, it's begun," he said finally. "They killed a woman. Indians did. Somewheres around Ti Beede told me."

There was a long silence. Then Whit said, "I'd sooner go meet 'em than to wait for 'em here. I'm going 't' join up."

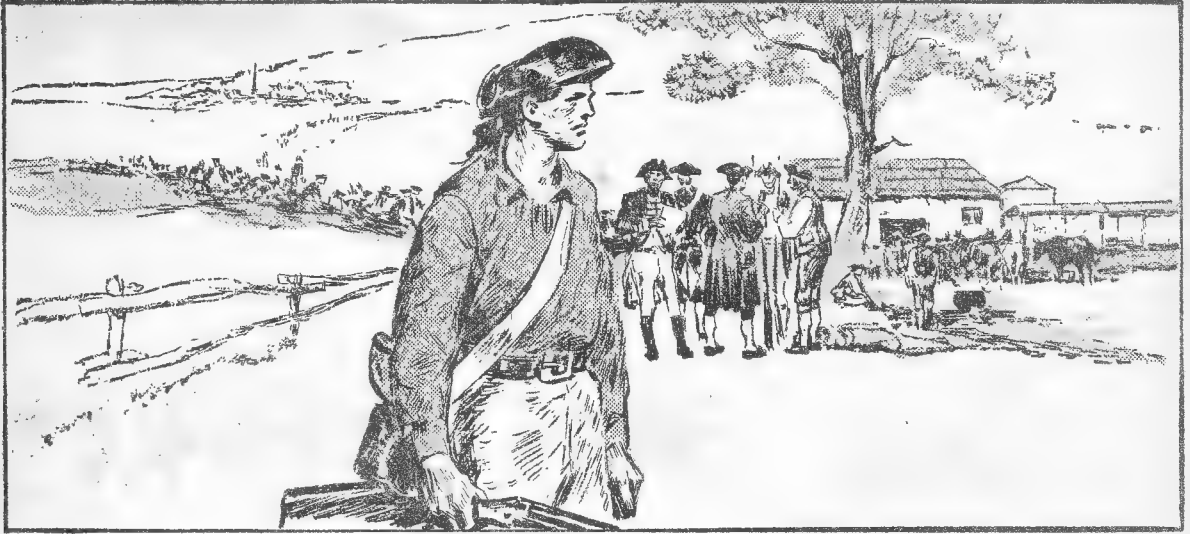
She stood there before him, her hands at her sides, and their life together was

shown in her face. They talked it over quietly. She came over and put her head on his chest, and he put his arms round her, and she cried for a while—scarcely making a sound.

Three days later, he went.

... Melissa walked with him on the path into the woods. Then she said, "Well, I guess I'll go back now," and Whit said, "All right," and laid his rifle aside. She stepped into his arms—and he knew as she kissed him that she trusted him perfectly that in going away he was doing what he thought was right . . . and then the hard pain of leaving her took away any thoughts.

— Look to the Mountain —



"The camp was no trouble to find—not with three hundred fires and twelve hundred men."

Whit stopped at Beede's to get some powder, and Beede told him Colonel Stark, so the word was, had gone to Manchester. Whit said he guessed he'd try there, then—and to add the powder onto his score. Beede said, "To hell with it."

Leaving Beede's, Whit pushed on fast. He was traveling light and he made nearly fifty miles a day. People in the towns he passed gave him directions, but when he neared the end of his journey the camp at Manchester was no trouble to find—not with three hundred fires and twelve hundred men. There was high excitement

about it, the closer he got—and this was not only because he was nearing his goal. It was also because of the signs that there were of a big business afoot in which he was to share.

When he came to the edge of the camp, the very size of it made him want to hang back. Twelve hundred men in one place was more than he'd ever seen in his life. . . .

While Whit was hesitating, he saw Ensign Lord coming straight toward him. Lord looked up and saw Whit—and for an instant was puzzled. Then he broke into a smile, and said, "Where'd you come from?"

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit, you look good!"



"Joe Felipe's eyes got bigger and bigger . . ."

"Same place as you did—some time ago."

Ensign said, "Whit, you look good. How is Melissa?"

"We been all right."

"You with a comp'ny, Whit?"

"No, I come alone."

"Want t' join a good comp'ny?"

"Well, I don' know, Ensign. I figured I'd just stay round till the fightin' was over, and then I'd go home. I still got the best part of my hay to get in."

"So has everyone else. They all feel the same way. But you got to join up with

someone. Come with me, will you? We've got good men and a good captain."

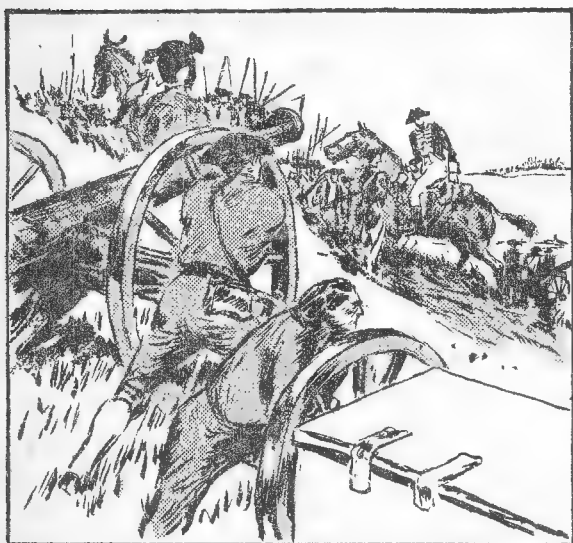
They wound their way through the camp until they came to a little group of men standing close around a forge.

Lord stopped and said to them clearly, "I got a recruit"—and they twisted their heads round and then stood apart . . .

In an old leather apron—a pair of tongs in one hand—Joe Felipe stood there, staring at Whit.

Joe Felipe's eyes got bigger and bigger. Whit watched him and waited. . . .

— Look to the Mountain —



"They formed a line near Bennington."



"Whit followed them, running and stumbling."

The alarm and surprise that had been in Joe Felipe's face when he first saw Whit began to disappear and Joe seemed to be trying to smile. Whit met him halfway with it, then turned away and took up the task of stowing his gear.

Whit slipped quickly into the camp routine. A few days later, he marched with the rest of the men to a battle line near Bennington. He sat down to rest against the trunk of a big red oak. He was feeling hopeless and sick. In a few minutes now the fighting would start. John Stark and Indians, Melissa at home, Britainers,

the cool of his house, and the weight of the rifle as it lay on his lap, these were the things that went through his head.

Stark spoke to the men. They cheered and began moving off—cursing and happy—or it seemed so to Whit.

Whit followed them—running and stumbling . . . he had fixed his eyes on Joe's hair ribbon and was following that.

He heard the sudden roar of a volley, and took cover with the rest. Then up on top of the hill just ahead of him, he saw a cannon go off. This was the battle.

"Here they come!" Over his front sight, Whit saw them rise up—orderly,

— Look to the Mountain —



"They wanted to shoot did they . . . ?"



"Whit ducked the thrust—and fell."

regular—but dim through the smoke . . . and he saw their muskets come up. There was a jagged, rattling roar—and he heard the wha-a-ang of the balls fade in back of his head. The sound woke him up! They had fired at him! Through a break in the smoke he saw a man's shoulder—he swung his sights onto it . . . and squeezed off as the bead came down into the notch. He couldn't actually see, but he knew he had hit him. They wanted to shoot did they? All right, then, let's shoot.

Men all around him began to rush forward and Whit went along. They were on top of the hill now. He saw Joe Felipe,

just in front of him, go up the bank, swing his musket down like a club—and jump down in amongst them. Whit followed. Two Hessians, side by side, lifted their muskets to thrust into Joe's back. Joe took the one on the right, going in under the bayonet—and Whit jammed his bare gun muzzle into the other one's face. Whit turned to his left—saw a thrust coming that he couldn't stop—ducked clear—and fell. He rolled for the jack boots of the man who'd tried for him, grabbed them—and felt his man coming down. Whit reached for his knife—and then his head seemed to explode. . . .

— Look to the Mountain —



"Whit knew who it was—Joe Felipe!"



"We beat 'em good, boy!"

As he lay there on the battlefield, face down, Whit tried to figure out what had happened. Dimly, he remembered falling and pulling a Britainer down with him. He got his eyes open, but everything swam so, and he seemed to be swaying. He shut his eyes again, and tried to get to his feet—and he almost made it.

... There was a man coming toward him. Whit looked on his face, and knew who it was: that was Joe Felipe's face. Whit could see Joe was asking him something. There didn't seem to be any way for Whit to tell what it was, but he felt friendly toward Joe, and he smiled. And then he knew Joe was bearing him up.

Whit could feel the great, moving strength of Joe...

Water struck his face, and Whit said, "No! No!" And Joe said, "You got your head broke. You be all right. I see 'em before."

"Just leave me lay here."

"Sure. Oh, Whit, what a fight! We beat 'em good, boy! Look: I don't know it is you next to me. Then when you go down, and try to pull that one down—then I see it is you. I don't know what I said. But I got him!"

The next thing Whit knew was someone calling his name, "Whit, don't you know me? It's Ensign Lord."

— Look to the Mountain —



"He came in the evening to his own clearing . . ."



"He saw her in happiness. He was home again!"

Whit opened his eyes. It was dark.

"Where's Joe?"

"He sent me to get you, Whit. Then he got hit. Grapeshot — from a cannon. He never knew it."

Lord got him up on his feet. He took a step forward—and he felt himself falling. He seemed to fall a long time . . .

When he came to, and the motion let up, he knew he was lying down somewhere. He put his hand out to feel the ground — but it wasn't ground; it was something unnatural—he tried with his left hand — and it fell off into space. That startled him so that he opened his eyes.

It was daylight. There were high rafters above him. He heard a man groan . . . and although it cost him a good deal of effort, he figured out finally that he lay on his back on a seat in a church.

They took him out of the church sometime during the day. There was a man on each side of him, holding his arms . . . and that part of it ended when they laid him down on a bed. He was in somebody's house.

One of the things he remembered about the next few days and nights was that there were two old people often came to his bed. The woman had a big, seamy face, and

— Look to the Mountain —

dark-colored, gray hair. Every time that Whit saw it, he knew she was going to pour something into his face. The man had a thin little face and kept blinking his eyes.

Ensign came once, and stood by the bed. He told Whit he'd located Whit's rifle, and Whit could have it again. But Whit had forgotten he'd lost it.

If he could just see Melissa, and take hold of her hand — then he thought he could turn over and go off to sleep.

A doctor came one day. All he did was talk for a minute or two — asked Whit about his place and so on—and then for no reason he showed Whit a fishhook, holding it right up close to Whit's eyes and moving it this way and that.

"You got to set that hook hard for that barb to take hold," Whit said.

The doctor laughed and stood up, and said, "I guess you'll fish again."

They got him up in a chair after what they said was only a week, and at the end of another four days he could walk about pretty well. They loaded him down with spoon victuals that sloshed about in him and put no strength in his knees.

He told them next morning that he'd got to go home. They put up quite an

argument—but he went. The old woman tried to get him to wait while she fixed him some soup to take with him. But Whit wouldn't have waited for anything now.

Seventeen days, by road, river, and path . . . and he came in the evening to Jonas Moore's house.

There was no one about—not even the dog. In twenty minutes or less, he was stretched out by the fire, and full of a warm and rich venison stew he'd found in the pot by the fireplace. Sleep was coming fast toward him—and he let it come . . .

Jonas went with him a little more than halfway the next morning. He said he guessed Whit could make it the rest of the way.

Crossing the pine plain. White found he couldn't go fast. He was doing all right, though. He could handle it now.

Before starting the uphill, he looked again at the sky. He wasn't sure but what it was getting ready to clear . . . and he stood and gazed at it longer than there was any real need to because it gave him a chance to gather his strength.

Slowly, stubbornly he made his way up. Thirty feet at a time — and then stand to rest.

He got to the top of it. But as he stood

— Look to the Mountain —

there, his knees buckled suddenly, and he had to grab hold of a tree and hang on. But he didn't go down.

And then there came into being over the sodden, brown track, between the near tree trunks, and on down through the woods, the same strange, growing light that he had known once before.

He couldn't see the mountain from here. He stood in the path, facing the way he would go . . . and he knew that the mountain had come out of the clouds. As he had seen it before, it rode now in the sky.

His thin lips were parted in a kind of smile, he swayed just a little, and he went ahead on the path.

Halfway through his own clearing he could stand it no longer. He leaned on his

rifle and stood very still—and he called to the house.

She came out of the doorway—stood—and she saw him — and she picked up her skirts, and she came down that hill as though she were a girl running.

He let his rifle fall from his hand—and he went forward to meet her, holding his arms out—

They had that instant together. Then the two boys came pelting down the hill. Young Jonas clung to his father. Whit stooped down and gathered Gowan up in his arms, holding him close.

After a time Whit looked up at Melissa. She had been standing there watching all three . . .

He saw her in happiness. He was home again.

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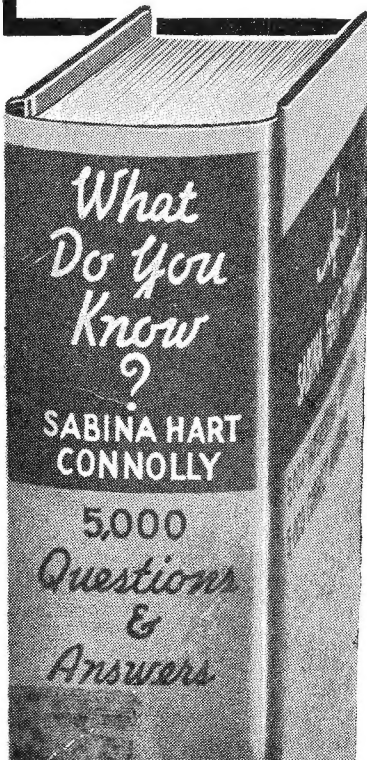
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